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ABSTRACT

Designed for elementary school teachers, the document presents two short puppet plays about children who are different. The first story focuses on a young boy's concerns about being adopted. The second play is about a boy who is learning disabled. The plays, which require only two acting characters, are accompanied by two song lyrics and a list of related classroom discussion topics. This document is part of a collection of materials from the Iowa Education Agency 7 Teacher Center project. (LH)

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REALITY PUPPETRY

"WHAT DO YOU WANTA' KNOW ABOUT ME"

DEVELOPED BY:

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AREA EDUCATION AGENCY 7

Cedar Falls, Iowa

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Author(s): Dolores Ratcliff

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AEA 7 Teacher Center
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Sept. 15, 1978 to Aug. 15, 1983

Teacher Center Policy Board Chair - Doris Mauer
Teacher Center Director - Diane Gibson, Ed. D.

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INTRODUCTION

These are two puppet plays about kids who are different. The first story is about Peter. Peter is adopted. He discusses adoption with Shirley, a girl he just met. The second play is about Jason. Jason is learning disabled.

This kit is arranged to be used in three ways. You can choose which way you are comfortable with. The puppets are large. They were designed for teacher use only (or adult). This play requires at least two adults presenting it. Each puppet may be worked by one adult or by two adults. If one adult is working the puppet, one hand must be made stationary. The other hand goes into one glove. Try using the puppet both ways and discover which hand feels best. Pin the other hand to the body. If two adults work each puppet, one adult can work the head while the other one works the hands. The head worker stands to the side of the puppet while the hand worker stands behind. These plays require no stage. The participants can stand behind a table or sit on the floor with the children.

FIRST WAY COULD BE USED: Use the puppets in the kit, but learn the dialogue and songs in the plays to present yourself. There is a part of each play that calls for audience questions. This would be easy to do when you are speaking the dialogue.

SECOND WAY COULD BE USED: Use the puppets in the kit, and learn the dialogue of each script. Instead of singing the songs yourself, use the "Song Tape" provided in the kit. The audience participation section could still be used.

THIRD WAY COULD BE USED: If you do not feel confident in presenting puppet plays, a complete tape of the dialogue and songs is in the kit. The tape could be played while you work the puppets.

These plays may be presented separately or collectively.

Good Luck!
Delores Ratcliff

PETER: THE RED-HEADED PUPPET

SHIRLEY: THE FEMALE PUPPET

Peter is sitting reading a book when Shirley approaches. As she is walking, she looks back and speaks.

SHIRLEY: See you later at my house, girls.

As she is looking back, she almost stumbles over Peter.

SHIRLEY: Oops! Why don't you watch it, fellow!

PETER: Why don't you watch where you are going!

SHIRLEY: Who do you think you are?

PETER: I'm Peter Blake - if it's any of your business.

SHIRLEY: (starting to settle down) Peter Blake? Are you Pam Blake's brother?

PETER: Yeh

SHIRLEY: I know Pam from school. Hey, are you <u>sure</u> you're Pam's brother?

PETER: Why?

SHIRLEY: Well, you don't look like Pam. Pam and her Mom and Dad all have straight black hair and well . . . you've got curly red hair. Did you fall in something, or what?

PETER: No, I didn't fall into something! I don't have hair like my folks because I'm adopted.

SHIRLEY: Oh . . . I'm sorry.

PETER: Well, I'm not.

SHIRLEY: Well, I meant that I'm sorry you don't have a real family.

PETER: But I do. My Mom and Dad adopted me when I was a baby. They have gone to court, and I am legally and really theirs.

SHIRLEY: You mean you don't just live with them?

PETER: No, we are a family . . . a real fighting and loving family.

SHIRLEY: Don't your parents like Pam better because she is their real child?

PETER: Nope, they love us the same. We both are their real children. So that people don't get confused as to who they're talking about, the parents that have you are called "birth parents" and the parents that adopt you are called "adopted parents."

SHIRLEY: Then everything is okay at home about you, huh?

PETER: Well, not always. Sometimes my sister and I fight and she gets mad and says that she is special because Mom gave birth to her. Sometimes that hurts my feelings. But I know Mom and Dad love us equally, so I just wait and soon she is okay again. Sisters can be a real pain!

SHIRLEY: How can your parents love you the same? After all, Pam has their blood in her and you don't.

PETER: My Mom explained it this way. Her and Dad don't have the same blood in them, but they can love each other very much. Adoption is sort of like marriage love in that way.

SHIRLEY: I never thought of it that way. I guess we all have people we love who we aren't related to. Do you ever think about your "birth parents"?

PETER: Sometimes . . . especially when we have to search our tree in school, or on my birthday, or sometimes when people ask, "Where did you get your red hair".

SHIRLEY: Can they come back to get you?

PETER: No, I belong with my Mom and Dad. Besides my birth parents don't know who my adopted parents are, and my adopted parents don't know them either. The adoption agency keeps the records sealed.

SHIRLEY: Does it hurt you to think that they gave you away?

PETER: It used to. But I've grown to see that it took a lot of loving on their part to let me be adopted. It would have been much easier for them to keep me, even though they couldn't care for me very well. They thought of me first. That makes me proud.

SHIRLEY: Can you ever see them again?

PETER: When I get eighteen, if I want to, my parents and I can go to court to have the records opened. That's a long ways off and I don't know if I want to. I've already got parents. I know a song about how I feel about being adopted. Wanta hear it?

(SONG: I'M ADOPTED)

SHIRLEY: Gee, that's a great song to tell your feelings about adoption. Maybe some of the other kids might have some questions about it.

(THE GROUP CAN NOW ASK PETER ABOUT ADOPTION. YOU CAN HAVE OPEN QUESTIONS OR A FEW PLANTED ONES.)

PETER: Well, I've got to be getting home. It was good to talk with you. I'll tell my sister I saw you.

IDEAS TO BRING OUT IN ADOPTION DISCUSSION:

* 1. Adopted kids aren't just special - they are just like anyone else.

** 2. Don't use the words "You're adopted" as a joke as seen on TV sometimes.

3. In Iowa three ways of adopting:

    1. Agency
    2. Lawyer
    3. Doctor

4. Cost (if someone asks) ranges from $750.00 to $3,000.00 (average is $1,500).

5. You don't have to be a baby to get adopted - any age through adulthood.

6. Sometimes kids know who their birth parents are - most do not.

7. People adopting babies today have a 5 to 7 year wait. People who adopt older children don't have to wait so long.

I'M ADOPTED

I'm adopted --- what does that mean?
It means "birth parents" I've never seen.
It means a love of a special kind.
It means new parents that I call mine.

When you're adopted --- there is love.
You all fit together like fingers on a glove.
When you're adopted --- as you can see,
It means one thing --- you're a family.

When you're adopted --- it means the same.
The same rules for all, no matter what the name.
When you're adopted --- as you can see,
It means one thing --- you're a family.

Yeh, it means one thing --- you're a family.

Delores Ratcliff

LEARNING DISABILITIES

JASON: DARK HAIRED BOY PUPPET

SHIRLEY: FEMALE PUPPET

Jason walks on stage with a ball and glove.

JASON: Hey, Peter...wanta' toss the ball? (He throws it off stage. The ball comes back and he fumbles it. The ball and Jason almost fall down.) Hi Shirley, do you want to play ball?

SHIRLEY: OK.

JASON: Here goes.

They throw the ball back and forth a couple of times. Jason drops it every time.

SHIRLEY: (disgusted) Why are you so clumsy? You can't even hang onto a ball.

JASON: Well, I just am. I can't help it.

SHIRLEY: You have some trouble with writing and stuff in school. (Whispering) Aren't you smart or something?

JASON: I don't know that I'm a super brain, but I'm not dumb either. I have some learning problems. They call it learning disabled. They call it LD for short. I'm not retarded. I guess you would say I am average.

SHIRLEY: Are you brain-damaged then?

JASON: No, not exactly. They aren't sure what causes kids to be LD. Some people think it is something in the brain while others think it has to do with diet or heredity.

SHIRLEY: Are all LD kids clumsy like you?

JASON: Some are, but LD kids have a lot of different ways of showing up. Do you know Freddy Fenten?

SHIRLEY: Yeh.

JASON: He is the best pitcher our school has on the baseball team, but he can't read very well. He is LD in a different way. And Mary Barfield? She has a hard time concentrating and paying attention in school. She is LD too.

SHIRLEY: I have problems remembering my math facts in my head, but I know them when I see them, and I can't bat a ball very well.

JASON: We all have some learning problems, some just more than others.

SHIRLEY: What can you do about it?

JASON: The kids who have problems that keep them from learning in school, go to a resource class every day for a while.

SHIRLEY: What do you do there?

JASON: I work on things to help my coordination and also some work like math and reading. It is easier for me to learn when there aren't so many people in the room.

SHIRLEY: What do the other kids think about you?

JASON: LD handicap is kind of tough. We don't look different like blind kids or kids in a wheel chair, so people don't understand why we can't do everything right. Sometimes they call me a "dummy". That hurts my feelings cause I know I'm just as smart as they are. Once I made up a song about it. Can I sing it for you?

SHIRLEY: Sure. How about you kids out there?

(SONG: ME AND YOU)

SHIRLEY: Hey, I liked that. Jason, will you always be LD?

JASON: Yes, I guess I will. But I can learn to use what I have instead of what I don't have. There are lots of ways of doing something.

SHIRLEY: Is everything hard for you?

JASON: No, I'm a real good speller and I like to make up stories. Because writing is such a problem for me, I tape my stories. My Mom has typed some of them up and I've had them published in children's magazines. I want to be a writer when I grow up.

SHIRLEY: But usually writers have to go to college, don't they?

JASON: Sometimes. LD kids can go to college when they grow up if they want to. If a kid has trouble reading, he can get books taped. If he has trouble writing, someone else can copy his words for him.

SHIRLEY: I didn't know much about kids who are LD.

JASON: Maybe some of the kids out there have some questions about it.

(CLASS DISCUSSION: MAY BE OPEN OR WITH PREPARED QUESTIONS)

SHIRLEY: I've got to get home now. I sure liked talking to you, Jason.

JASON: Bye Shirley...Hey any of you kids wanta play ball with me?

IDEAS TO BRING OUT IN LD DISCUSSION:

1. Understand LD are not retarded.
2. Try to have patience when they are trying a difficult task.
3. We all have some learning problems.
4. Just because they can't do some things well doesn't mean they can't do something else very well.
5. Not all LD kids have the same difficulties.

ME AND YOU

CHORUS

Me and you and you and me,
Together we can always be.
Me and you and you and me,
We can always be friends.

We're not alike in a different way,
I can write, but I cannot play.
You can play, but you cannot bat.
This is where we're at.

Sometimes I'm mad when I can't do good.
My Mom says do the best that I could.
When I try, I feel just grand.
Doing the best I can.

Some day I'll grow up and I'll be tall.
I won't feel bad that I can't catch a ball.
Lots of things for me to do,
So I won't be blue.

Delores Ratcliff